

How Stages Correlates with the Maine Comprehensive Assessment System [MCAS]

Stages is relevant for a broad spectrum of Maine learners with special needs.

- Learners who are evaluated through alternate assessment as well as those preparing for the MCAS with or without accommodations benefit from the powerful data-gathering features of Stages.
- Through Stages, learners gain meaningful and effective access to the general curriculum.
- Stages helps the instructional teams to determine the learning and assessment environment most suited toward the learner.

The following sections describe the relevance of Stages to these learner populations in greater detail.

Stages and the Maine Alternate Assessment Process

OVERVIEW

Stages includes two major software components: (a) informal benchmark software and (b) curriculum software. Stages informal assessment software is instructional in nature, providing activities with constructive feedback and opportunities for the learner to explore and choose. Stages curriculum software is a collection of interactive daily instructional programs appropriate for learners at each Stage.

Stages software enhances the Maine's alternate assessment process because:

1. **Stages correlates with the contents of Maine's *Learning Results*.**
2. **Stages generates evidence for the learner's Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP).**
3. **Stages allows learner to demonstrate functional skills prior to formal assessment.**
4. **Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.**

1. **Stages correlates with the contents of Maine's *Learning Results*.**

A major IDEA '97 goal is to include all students in statewide assessments and general education curriculum regardless of disabilities. Stages ensures meaningful and effective access to general curriculum areas because Stages activities can be completed using a variety of input devices, such as mouse pointer, touch screen, switches, and keyboard. Stages content aligns with general education curriculum standards in mathematics and English language arts, as well as functional living skills. Please refer to the next section, "How Stages Correlates with Maine's *Learning Results*" for detailed matching between the informal assessment software and specific academic curricula.

2. **Stages generates evidence for the learner's Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP).**

During Stages software activities, the instructor can print directly from any screen to capture a learner-generated product. At the end of each activity, a report with data about the time spent, choices made, response accuracy or work product, input method, prompt type, and time/date stamp are displayed with the learner's name. The instructional team member may wish to then print that screen or save the information as a text-format electronic file.

Observation guidelines and forms in the Stages kits help the instructional team make the most out of an activity session as the data-gathering features of the software enable the observer to focus on noting the learner's behavior and thinking-out-loud responses. Two adults from the instructional team can work together: one adult can encourage the learner and the other can note valuable data about behaviors without being noticed by the learner. Alternatively if a video or

still camera is available, it may be directed at the learner and the computer monitor to discreetly record interactions and other behaviors while one adult coaches. Over time, the collected data will provide evidence that the instructional team needs to build a complete picture of the learner's skill achievement.

3. Stages allows the learner to demonstrate skills prior to formal assessment.

The feedback in Stages activities is encouraging and rewarding, providing a relaxed setting for exploring topics and demonstrating achievement. During the sessions, the learner will be less conscious of her performance being recorded, making her responses more candid.

4. Stages assists the learner's IEP and/or instructional teams with selecting assistive technology and assessment tools.

An objective of Stages software is to provide several options for input methods and other settings so that the learner's IEP/instructional team can determine his ideal learning and communication environment. Different devices, auditory feedback, speeds and prompts are among the variables.

SUMMARY

Stages augments the Maine alternative assessment cycle. The Stages software is a comprehensive tool to assist the instructional team in collecting valuable evidence for the learner's PAAP, determining assessment strategy, and discovering the learner's abilities and thinking approach.

How Stages Correlates with Maine's *Learning Results*¹

Mathematics Grades PreK-4 Standards and Performance Indicators (grade levels in bold)

Standard A: NUMBERS AND NUMBER SENSE

Students will understand and demonstrate a sense of what numbers mean and how they are used.

Grade PreK-2

1. Demonstrate an understanding of what numbers mean (e.g., that the number 7 stands for a group of objects).
2. Understand the many uses of numbers (e.g., prices, recipes, measurement, directions in play).
3. Order, compare, read, group, and apply place value concepts to numbers up to 1,000.

Grade 3-4

2. Read, compare, order, classify, and explain simple fractions [through tenths].
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the meaning of decimals and integers and an understanding of how they may be used.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: *Math Readiness:* Number ID, Counting

Stage Five: *Math:* Fractions

Problem Solving: Number Guess

Stage Six: *Stories:* Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Explore: Counting Money, Telling Time

Assess: Money Equivalents, Counting Money, Telling Time

Stage Four prepares the learner for counting skills assessment by introducing the concept that numbers represent quantity. Stage Five introduces the concept of fractions and invites the learner to exercise newly acquired problem solving skills in strategy games. Stage Six applies number concepts to functional living, introducing measurements such as money and time.

¹ Information found in State of Maine Learning Results Document (July 1997), by the Maine Department of Education. Document source: <http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/lres.htm> (Accessed March 22, 2002).

Standard B: COMPUTATION

Students will understand and demonstrate computation skills.

Grade PreK-2

1. Use and apply estimation with quantities, measurements, computations, and problem-solving.
2. Use multiple strategies in solving problems involving addition and subtraction of whole numbers.
3. Show understanding of addition and subtraction by using a variety of materials, strategies, and symbols.

Grade 3-4

4. Develop proficiency with the facts and algorithms of the four operations on whole numbers using mental math and a variety of materials, strategies, and technologies

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Compare, Estimating, Spatial Relationships

Stage Five: Math: Math Facts (+, -, x, ÷), Word Problems (+, -, x, ÷)

The learner compares attributes of common objects in the context of various scenes in Stage Four. The illustrations in Stage Five serve as virtual manipulatives for problems involving the four basic operations. Additionally, Stage Five allows the learner to use his or her own concrete objects to solve problems without the aid of an illustration.

Standard C: DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICS

Students will understand and apply concepts of data analysis.

Grade 3-4

1. Make generalizations and draw conclusions using various types of graphs, charts, and tables.
2. Read and interpret displays of data.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Charts and Graphs

Charts and graphs in Stage Five are presented in the context of a scenario. They are illustrated with appealing graphics.

Standard E: GEOMETRY

Students will understand and apply concepts from geometry.

Grade PreK-2

1. Describe, model, and classify 2D shapes [and selected 3D figures].
3. Use positional words to describe the relationship of two or more objects (e.g., over, under, beside, to the left).

Grade 3-4

1. Describe, model, and classify shapes and figures using applicable properties.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Compare, Spatial Relationships

Shapes: Explore and Assess

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Mystery Shape

Relative quantities, positions, sizes are addressed extensively in the Stage Four activities. The learner compares and identifies shapes in Stages Four and Five. Problem Solving is fun in Stage Five activities, where the learner participates in games of strategy.

Standard F: MEASUREMENT

Students will understand and demonstrate measurement skills.

Grade PreK-2

1. Estimate and measure length, time, [temperature, weight,] and capacity.
2. Identify and give the value of different coins.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Math: Geometry

Stage Six: Explore: Using Money, Telling Time

Assess: Money Names, Money Equivalents, Counting Money, Telling Time

Standard and nonstandard units of measurement are included in Stage Five. Real-life situations in Stage Six help the learner to understand the relation between tasks and money amounts or time of day.

Standard G: PATTERNS, RELATIONS, FUNCTIONS

Students will understand that is the science of patterns, relationships, and functions.

Grade PreK-2

1. Recognize, describe, extend, copy, and create a wide variety of patterns..

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Math Readiness: Explore Patterns, Continue/Fill In Patterns, Create Patterns

The *Patterns* activities include visual and sound effects for students who benefit from multisensory feedback.

Standard I: DISCRETE MATHEMATICS

Students will understand and apply concepts in discrete mathematics.

Grade PreK-2

1. Classify sets of objects into two or more groups using their attributes.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Three: Category Identification: Animals, Clothing, Vehicles

Stage Five: Problem Solving: Mystery Shape, Mystery Person

The learner begins to classify objects into different categories in Stage Three. Stage Five activities give the learner a chance to exercise deductive reasoning abilities.

English Language Arts Grades PreK-4

Standards and Performance Indicators (grade levels in bold)

Standard A: PROCESS OF READING

Students will use the skills and strategies of the reading process to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate what they have read.

Grade PreK-2

1. Seek out and enjoy experiences with books and other print materials.
5. Figure out unknown words using a variety of strategies including rereading, context clues, and knowledge of word structures and letter-sound relationships.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Four: Reading Readiness: Letter ID, Letter Sounds

Stage Five: Reading: Sounds, Meaning, Context

Stage Six: Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Stage Four *Letter Sounds* and *Letter ID* prepare the learner for phonemic awareness. Nursery rhyme structure and other clues in the Stage Five activities make use of rhyming patterns to assist with decoding of words. Stage Six *Stories* provide the learner with an alternative means of access to short stories.

Standard B: LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Students will use reading, listening, and viewing strategies to experience, understand, and appreciate literature and culture.

Grade PreK-2

1. Understand the basic plot of simple stories.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Five: Reading: Meaning, Context (High Frequency Words)

Stage Six: Stories: Cody, Mitchell, Meg, Adam, Ryan

Stages provides reading practice by presenting stories with and without audio narration.

Standard C: LANGUAGE AND IMAGES

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how words and images communicate.

Grade PreK-2

2. Recognize characteristic sounds and rhythms of language, including the relationship between sounds and letters.
3. Make valid observations about the use of words and visual symbols.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Two: Nouns, Verbs, Attributes

Stage Three: Levels of Representation: Photo, Drawing, Symbol

Stage Four: Reading Readiness: Letter Sounds

Stage Five: Reading: Sounds

Stage Seven: Making Words: Rhyming Words

Engaging illustrations, animations, and video clips bring meaning and text together in Stages Two and Three. The learner can demonstrate mastery of rhyming words in Stage Five *Sounds* and Stage Seven *Rhyming Words*.

Standard E: PROCESSES OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

Students will demonstrate the ability to use the skills and strategies of the writing process.

Grade PreK-2

1. Tell about experiences and discoveries, both orally and in writing.
2. Respond to stories orally and in writing.
3. Respond to remarks or statements orally and in writing.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

The non-verbal learner can take advantage of the text-to-speech option in *Making Stories* to express responses and opinions.

Standard F: STANDARD ENGLISH CONVENTIONS

Students will write and speak correctly, using conventions of standard written and spoken English.

Grade PreK-2

1. Edit their own written work for standard English spelling and usage, as evidenced by pieces that show and contain:
 - complete sentences.
 - initial understanding of the use of pronouns and adjectives.
 - evidence of correct spelling of frequently used words.
 - few significant errors in the capitalization of proper nouns and of the words that begin sentences.
 - few significant errors in the use of end stop punctuation (e.g., periods, question marks).

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Sentences: Building Sentences, Writing Sentences
Making Stories

The instructor can enter sentences from the learner's written work to create custom editing activity.

Standard G: STYLISTIC AND RHETORICAL ASPECTS OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

Students will use stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing and speaking to explore ideas, to present lines of thought, to represent and reflect on human experience, and to communicate feelings, knowledge, and opinions.

Grade PreK-2

1. Dictate or write stories or essays which convey basic ideas, have sequences that make sense, and show evidence of a beginning, middle, and ending.

Related Stages Assessment Activities:

Stage Seven: Making Stories

The learner can independently create short written works using an appropriate input device and the on-screen keyboard option in this activity.